Craftsman Screwdriver Evolution 1950-2017
Part I: Pre Western Forge Butyrate Handles 1950-c.1970

Codes

Circle F: Miller's Falls c.1950-6?
Circle G: c.1950-6?
G: ? 195?-70?
Circle I: Parker Mfg. Co. 1950-70? (Mid 1980s for screw holding drivers.)

Introduction and Background

This series will cover the Butyrate handled screwdrivers onward, but some background on previous models of plastic handles is needed.

In 1937 the first plastic handle was introduced. These were called "Craftsman Insolen Screwdrivers." They were discontinued a year later in 1938, and they are very rare today as I haven't even seen a picture of one outside of the Sears catalog. Poor durability could explain both their rarity and their short availability.

In 1939 the amber handles were introduced. They were produced by Vlchek and Parker Wire Goods (later called Parker Mfg. Co.). These handles were hard, but brittle, being replaced in 1950 with the Butyrate handles.

History

In 1950, screwdriver handles made from Cellulose Acetate Butyrate (CAB) were introduced. CAB has many advantages, it is strong, durable, and resistant to chemicals, with one drawback being that they will stink when they start to slowly deteriorate.

The screwdriver handles from 1950 to about 1954 have ribs on the flutes, and were marked Super Tuff, and from 1955-70 are marked Vanadium. There were some minor changes to the shapes of the ball and the thumb rest, but I won't go into that here.

The Circle I, Circle F, Circle G and G series screwdrivers probably ended when Western Forge started producing screwdrivers in 1966, but I am not certain. Western Forge will be discussed in part II.

Images

An example of a NOS Circle G set.

It's hard to see, but it does appear to have a circle G code. (Not my photo, from worthpoint.)

An example of a G code screwdriver. (Not my photo, from d42jeep on Garage Journal.)

An example of a Circle I screwdriver. This is a screwholding screwdriver and the patent is assigned to Parker Wire Goods later called Parker Mfg. Co. (Not my photo, from Mickey O on Garage Journal.)

Two Miller's Falls Circle F screwdrivers. (Not my photo from worthpoint.)

Pre CAB Handles

The elusive "Insolen" handled screwdrivers. From Fall 1937 catalog.

An example of an amber handled screwdriver with a Vlchek BC code. (Not my photo, from A E Numan on Garage Journal.)